What is claimed is:

1.   A method for loading a portable executable (PE) image, the method comprising:

    determining whether a PE image for a platform firmware runtime service includes a discardable section;

    loading part of the PE image into runtime memory to be used by the platform firmware; and

    in response to determining that the PE image includes a discardable section, omitting at least part of the discardable section when loading the PE image into the runtime memory.

2.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

    loading the discardable section into boot-time memory to be used by the platform firmware.

3.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

    using an alignment granularity of less than one kilobyte when loading the PE images into the runtime memory.

4.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

    using an alignment granularity of less than one hundred bytes when loading the PE images into the runtime memory.

5.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

    pre-allocating an area of runtime memory for PE images; and

    loading sections from multiple PE images into the pre-allocated area of runtime memory.

6.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

    pre-allocating an area of runtime memory for PE images; and

loading sections from multiple PE images into the pre-allocated area of runtime memory; and

using an alignment granularity of less than one kilobyte when loading the PE images into the pre-allocated area of runtime memory.

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7.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

recording a runtime memory size in association with a first boot process; and

pre-allocating an area of runtime memory for PE images in association with
10   a subsequent boot process, based at least in part on the recorded runtime memory size.

8.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

recording a runtime memory size in association with a first boot process;
15   pre-allocating an area of runtime memory for PE images in association with a subsequent boot process, based at least in part on the recorded runtime memory size; and

loading sections from multiple PE images into the pre-allocated area of runtime memory.

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9.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

recording a first runtime memory size in association with a first boot process;

pre-allocating an area of runtime memory for PE images in association with
25   a subsequent boot process, based at least in part on the recorded runtime memory size;

loading sections from multiple PE images into the pre-allocated area of runtime memory;

determining how much of the pre-allocated area of runtime memory was
30   used; and

recording a second runtime memory size in association with the second boot process, based at least in part on the determination of how much of the pre-allocated area of runtime memory was used.

10.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the PE image comprises header
information, the method further comprising:

     omitting at least part of the header information when loading the PE image
5   into the runtime memory.

11.   A method for creating a portable executable (PE) image, the method
comprising:

     receiving an object file at a linker, the object file containing multiple
10   discardable sections with instructions for performing boot-time operations and a
section with instructions for performing runtime operations; and

     generating an executable PE image, based at least in part on the object
file;

     wherein the operation of generating the executable PE image comprises
15   grouping the multiple discardable sections together in the PE image.

12.   A method according to claim 11, wherein the operation of grouping the
multiple sections with instructions for performing boot-time operations together in
the PE image comprises:

20   grouping the multiple discardable sections together below the section with
instructions for performing runtime operations.

13.   A method for booting a processing system, the method comprising:

     retrieving a portable executable (PE) image for a runtime service to be
25   provided by platform firmware for the processing system;

     determining whether the PE image includes a discardable section;

     in response to determining that the PE image includes a discardable
section, loading the discardable section into boot-time memory to be used by the
platform firmware; and

30   loading part of the PE image into runtime memory to be used by the
platform firmware; but

     omitting at least part of the discardable section when loading the PE image
into the runtime memory.

14.   A method according to claim 13, further comprising:

pre-allocating an area of runtime memory for PE images;

loading sections from multiple PE images into the pre-allocated area of

5   runtime memory; and

using an alignment granularity of less than four kilobytes when loading the

PE images into the pre-allocated area of runtime memory.

15.   A method according to claim 13, wherein the PE image comprises header

10   information, the method further comprising:

omitting at least part of the header information when loading part of the PE

image into the runtime memory.

16.   An apparatus containing control logic for providing a runtime service for a

15   processing system, the apparatus comprising:

a machine-accessible medium; and

a portable executable (PE) image in the machine-accessible medium, the

PE image for providing a runtime service for the processing system, wherein the

PE image comprises:

20   a section with instructions for performing runtime operations; and

multiple discardable sections with instructions for performing boot-time

operations, wherein the multiple discardable sections are grouped together in the

PE image.

25   17.   An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the multiple discardable

sections are grouped together below the section with instructions for performing

runtime operations.

18.   A processing system with control logic for managing PE images, the
processing system comprising:
        a processor;
        a machine-accessible medium responsive to the processor;
5   instructions in the machine-accessible medium which, when executed by
the processor, implement an image loader; and
        a portable executable (PE) image in the machine-accessible medium, the
PE image for providing a runtime service in platform firmware for the processing
system;
10   wherein the PE image comprises:
        a section with instructions for performing runtime operations; and
        multiple discardable sections with instructions for performing boot-time
operations; and
        wherein the multiple discardable sections are grouped together in the PE
15   image.

19.   A processing system according to claim 18, wherein the image loader
comprises control logic:
        to determine whether the PE image includes a discardable section;
20   to load part of the PE image into runtime memory to be used by the
platform firmware; and
        in response to determining that the PE image includes a discardable
section, to omit at least part of the discardable section when loading the PE image
into the runtime memory.
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20.   A processing system according to claim 19, wherein the image loader
comprises control logic to load the discardable section into boot-time memory to
be used by the platform firmware.

21.   A processing system according to claim 19, wherein the image loader comprises control logic:

        to pre-allocate an area of runtime memory for PE images;

        to load sections from multiple PE images into the pre-allocated area of
5   runtime memory; and

        to use an alignment granularity of less than four kilobytes when loading the
PE images into the pre-allocated area of runtime memory.